N 9

"Inquiſition for Blood ſhall be made."

To the Inhabitants of Briſtol, and Parts adjacent:

FRIENDS AND FELLOW CITIZENS!

SO new, and ſo extremely intereſting to us all, have been the late proceedings in this city, reſpecting the Bridge Tolls, that as an Individual concerned for Truth, Order, Liberty, and Safety, I feel myſelf bound to addreſs you. It is a trite, but juſt remark, exemplified not only on common, but extraordinary occaſions, that whatever is Any-body's Buſineſs becomes No-body's. However ſtrange, it appears to be almoſt probable, that the Facts and merits of the late Diſaſterous Tranſactions are in danger of paſſing into oblivion, without any proper Exertion to have them clearly aſcertained, and fully commited to record! Vague and contradictory have been the accounts of the manner in which the Military were ordered to begin and continued to fire, on the mixed and unarmed Multitude, on the memorable Evening of the 30th ultimo. Alſo as to the number of Citizens ſlain and wounded. Is it that we were ſo petrified with aſtoniſhment, as to have hitherto loſt the uſual powers of human recollection; or that the Terror of Magiſtracy (which ſhould only be a Terror to Evil-Doers) has awed us into ſilence and ſubmiſſion?—Buſineſs of an important Nature,—not in a violent, ſanguinary, or even a reproachful Spirit,—but in a Spirit, at once patriotic, firm, and fearleſs of frowning Authority, remains to be undertaken!—It is our Duty to take a very particular, and ſolemn Cognizance of the paſt Scene. The Truſtees of the Bridge had been long ſuſpected of having in times paſt, at leaſt negligently attended to their Truſt, and of having ſuffered Defalcations of Income which have occaſioned an unneceſſary continuance of the Toll. Either this is, or is not, true. But it is at leaſt a Subject worthy of inveſtigation, by ſome adequate proceſs;—for on this Fact will in ſome Meaſure ſtand juſtified the general prejudices of the Public, againſt the laſt moſt active Truſtees, tho' they have lately complied with the call of the People, to publiſh their annual Accounts. Either it was at laſt *a right* meaſure in them to attempt, of their Authority, to raiſe a larger Fund than the Act of Parliament allowed them, and thereby to make their Pleaſure the Law of Taxation on the Public, or it was *enormouſly wrong*. Candid men will conſider the latter as the Fact. Under ſuch circumſtances, to commit overt-acts of Uſurpation—to raiſe and dare the reſentment of the Populace—to defy with Military Force, and proceed to the Horrors of a bloody Tragedy,—which nothing but the Extremity of violence againſt the moſt righteous Cauſe could juſtify,—are imputed crimes, my fellow Citizens, over which we ſhould not ſlumber! They ſhould be brought to the Teſt of legal proof, of impartial Reaſon—and the Law of our Country!——It is not to ſtir up Tumult—or to retaliate the Horrors of nocturnal Murder, that the Writer of this addreſſes you. Men, however inſulted, ſhould be tender of the ſacrifice of human Life—and whenever a ſacrifice is made, it ſhould be affected with the order and ſolemn ſanction of the Laws. I truſt we ſhall have but one ſentiment on this Topic. But either our lamented fellow Citizens have been lawfully or unlawfully,—juſtifiably or criminally ſlain! The manner of it has, or has not, been attended with thoſe aggravating Circumſtances of wanton and pointed ſlaughter, of which we have heard ſo much! If Guilt and Crime fully attach, as we believe, to the perpetrators of ſuch a Carnage,; and inſtead of merely "ſeveral perſons being "killed and wounded," *many* were killed on the ſpot, and *many* ſince have died of their wounds, and *many* remain, the maimed objects of our Commiſſeration,—let us be no longer criminally ſupine, under circumſtances like theſe!!——Let ſome ſenſible, humane and generous Citizens form themſelves into a ſociety of *Inveſtigation*, and if neceſſary of *Proſecution*!—Let the full magnitude of original Blame, be known and publiſhed:——Let the progreſs of Error and Domination be diſtinctly marked and publiſhed on Evidence!——Let the Number, Names and Deſcription, of the murdered and the maimed be known and publiſhed alſo.—And let ſubſcriptions be entered into for indicting ſome of thoſe in *particular* againſt whom the ſolemnity of an inqueſt has brought a *general Charge* of WILFUL MURDER!!!

VERITAS.

BRISTOL, Oct. 7, 1793.

(6)